

Story 1779 (1994 Tape 3)

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A Padishah's Concern About the Welfare of Kayseri¹

This story is about one of the Ottoman padishahs. One of his viziers always reported to him at once whenever an earthquake or flood occurred. He would say, for example, "My padishah, an earthquake has just occurred in such and such a place. The people there are in desperate circumstances."

After acknowledging this piece of information, padishah would always ask, "And how are my people at Kayseri? Are they all right?"

The vizier would always answer, "Yes, my padishah, they are safe." But after a while the vizier became very curious about the padishah's continuing concern about the people of Kayseri. Finally one day his curiosity got better of him, and so he asked the padishah about it.

¹People of Kayseri Province and especially of the provincial capital of the same name are stereotyped as being shrewd, cagey, and opportunistic. A folk proverb says, "He may not be able to read or write, but if he comes from Kayseri, look out for him!"

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my padishah, whenever I report disasters that have befallen this or that place in your land, you always ask me about the welfare of the people of Kayseri. Do you mind telling me why you do that?"

The padishah answered, "You know how shrewd and Kayserians are. If a disaster struck Kayseri and its people were scattered throughout the entire land, can you imagine my situation? They are a serious enough problem even now when they remain in one place!"